

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Recruits experience National Guard training

By Spc. Lucas Schultz

Alpha Battery, 1/147th Field Artillery

CAMP RIPLEY, Minn. – For a day and a half, 15 potential recruits lived alongside Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, during a recruiting event at Camp Ripley, Aug. 5-6.

The purpose of the event was to show recruits what Soldiers do during annual training with the hope they will join the ranks of the SDARNG.

The recruits slept in the same barracks, ate the same food and completed basic soldiering tasks.

Their first task was to learn about the M240B machine gun. They learned about the weapon system and safety precautions before moving onto the M249 squad automatic weapon.

A recruiting event like this is critical to the success of the SDARNG, said Maj. Steve Siemonsma, battalion executive officer of the 1/147th.

"If we don't do things like this, it gets harder and harder to recruit," said Siemonsma. "We need to have our Soldiers out there showing them what we do, being positive about what we do and bringing them to realistic training.

"Showing them that we're not just in a classroom, one weekend a month. These are the things we actually train on. I think it's very important that we continue to do this. The bottom line is that we have to recruit."

With the help of the Soldiers, participants also learned about the .50 caliber machine gun and M203 grenade launcher. The Soldiers even added a challenge by splitting up the recruits into three-man teams to see which team could run 50-yards to their weapon and assemble it the fastest.

The winning team completed the task in 1 minute, 35 seconds.

"I think by the time they were done, they knew the weapon system about as well as I do," said Siemonsma.

The following day, participants were able to take the knowledge they learned from the Soldiers and apply it at the range by firing the .50 caliber machine guns and M203 grenade launchers.

"When they got on the range to shoot, you could tell that they learned a lot," said Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Rose, 1-147th senior noncommissioned officer. "They loved shooting the weapons – they thought the .50 cal. was especially awesome."

After the ranges, the participants also went through a virtual Bradley Fighting Vehicle simulation.

Siemonsma and Rose agree that it was a positive experience for participants and Guard members.

“I think they learned a lot and they had a good time,” said Siemonsma. “I believe they now have an understanding of what we do during annual training. They also learned about themselves and figured out whether or not they have what it takes to do this... and I think they do.”

Rose said the recruiting event was worthwhile if only a few recruits enlist.

“Even if we only pick up a couple after this event, to me, it’s a huge success,” he said.

Recruits who participated in the training:

Jennica Chapin - Summit, S.D.

Abbey Hera - Viborg, S.D.

Mallory Vanklompenburg - Montevideo, Minn.

Tera Hansom - Milbank, S.D.

Jennika Rufer - Milbank, S.D.

Alyssa Schild - Yankton, S.D.

Jordan Lighten - Yankton, S.D.

Brady Rude - Brookings, S.D.

Savannah Gravatt - Watertown, S.D.

Bailey Weavill - Elk Point, S.D.

Dustin Steinle - Mount Vernon, S.D.

Halie Meyer - Wilmot, S.D.

Sam Di Vito - Centerville, S.D.

Wyatt Goltschius - Milbank, S.D.

Nathaniel Knoblock - Rock Rapids, Iowa

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



140805-Z-SF589-001: Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion instruct potential recruits how to operate a .50 caliber machine gun during a recruiting event at Camp Ripley, Minn., Aug. 5, 2014. The purpose of the event was to show recruits what Soldiers do during annual training with the hope they join the ranks of the SDARNG. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Lucas Schultz /Released)



140805-Z-SF589-002: U.S. Army Sgt. Cory Anderson, with the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion, instructs Jordan Lighten, of Yankton, S.D., a potential recruit, how to operate a .50 caliber machine gun while Brady Rude, right, of Brookings, S.D., and Nathaniel Knoblock, left, of Rock Rapids, Iowa, observe during a recruiting event at Camp Ripley, Minn., Aug. 5, 2014. The purpose of the event was to show recruits what Soldiers do during annual training with the hope they will join the ranks of the SDARNG. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Lucas Schultz /Released)



140805-Z-SF589-003: U.S. Army Spc. Lars Lengrehr, with the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion, instructs Brady Rude, of Brookings, S.D., a potential recruit, how to operate M203 grenade launcher during a recruiting event at Camp Ripley, Minn., Aug. 5, 2014. The purpose of the event is to show recruits what Soldiers do during annual training with the hope they join the ranks of the SDARNG. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Lucas Schultz /Released)



140805-Z-SF589-004: U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Burton Glover, with the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion, instructs Wayne Goltschius, of Milbank, S.D., a potential recruit, on how to operate a M203 grenade launcher during a recruiting event at Camp Ripley, Minn., Aug. 5, 2014. The purpose of the event was to show recruits what Soldiers do during annual training with the hope they will join the ranks of the SDARNG. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Lucas Schultz /Released)

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